

CHESS

Britannia rules

by Murray Chandler

THE Greater London Council exists no more (it was dissolved by the Thatcher Government) but the recently concluded GLC mega-tournament will be remembered for a long time yet. One of the GLC's final gestures was sponsorship of the London grandmaster tournament, held every two years since 1980. With a record £18,000 (\$50,000) prizefund, many famous names accepted invitations, among them former world champion Boris Spassky. But even he made little impact on Britain's balance of payments — English players took the top four places in a devastating home performance.

I almost said "English grandmasters" in the preceding sentence, which would have been a grave error — for the sensational winner of this category 13 event was only an international master. Glen Flear, 27, invited as a last-minute replacement, had the dream tournament of his life. Not content with finishing ahead of 13 top grandmasters, he even rearranged his round nine game to get married in the middle of the tournament. To spend your wedding night analysing a pawn-up adjournment against Jon Speelman might not be every bride's idea of a honeymoon, but 18-year-old Christine Leroy is herself French women's champion and I'm reliably informed many of the guests at the reception were set to work on this particular position!

One revolutionary new development at this tournament was the brilliant demonstration board technology. Although we players moved on apparently normal wooden chessboards, sensors beneath the surface were instantly transmitting each move to huge electronic boards. This electronic wizardry, completed days before the event began, alleviates the need for human operators (who often cannot keep up with fast play) and enables games to be dispatched via computer to anywhere in the world as they happen. Even post-mortems (where players go over the game they've just finished) could be seen live downstairs in the commentary room of the Great Eastern Hotel.

Final results were: 1, Flear (England) 8½/13 points; 2-3, Chandler (England/New Zealand) and Short (England) 8; 4-5, Nunn (England) and Ribli (Hungary) 7½; 6-8 Polugayevsky (USSR), Portisch (Hungary) and Spassky (ex-USSR, now France) 7; 9-10, Vaganian (USSR) and Speelman (England) 6; 11, Larsen (Denmark) 5½; 12, Plaskett (England) 5; 13-14, Dlugy (US) and Mestel (England) 4. I had some cause to be disappointed when a last round loss pushed me out of first equal, but did have the consolation of winning the £1000 brilliancy prize.

M CHANDLER	R VAGANIAN
1. e4	e6
2. d4	d5
3. Nc3	Bb4

4. e5	c5
5. a3	Ba5!?
6. b4	cxd4
7. Nb5	Bc7
8. f4	Bd7
9. Nf3	Bxb5!?
10. Bxb5 ch	Nc6
11. 0-0	Ne7
12. Bd3	a6
13. Kh1	h6
14. Qe2!	

This new idea came to me over the board. Instead 14. Bb2 Bb6 15. Qd2 would transpose to the game Short-Vaganian, Biel 1985. There White regained his d-pawn but lost the initiative (and later the game).

14. ...	Qd7
15. Bb2	Bb6
16. Rae1	Rc8?

This proves too provocative. 16. ... 0-0 17. g4! obviously gives White a strong attack, but Black can play for equality with 16. ... Nf5 17. Bxf5 exf5 18. Qd3 0-0.

17. g4!	g6
18. Nh4	h5!
19. f5	hxg4
20. fxg6!	

Instead of this knight sacrifice, 20. fxg6 Qxe6 21. Rf6 was incredibly tempting. Then I noticed 21. ... Rxh4! (only move) 22. Rxe6 fxe6 23. Rg1 Kd7 and suddenly Black is better.

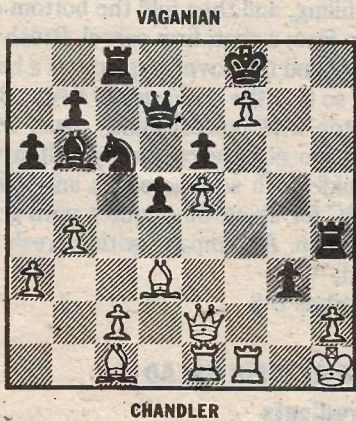
20. ...	Rxh4
21. gxh7 ch	Kf8
22. Bc1!	

This modest retreat seals Black's fate. The threat is simply 23. Qf2 Rh3 24. Qf6 winning.

22. ...	Nf5
23. Bxf5	d3!

An ingenious attempt at counterattack. 23. ... exf5 24. e6 Qe7 25. Rxf5 would be overwhelming for White.

24. Bxd3	g3
25. Qg2!	



The £1000 queen sacrifice!

25. ...	Rxh2 ch
26. Qxh2	gxh2
27. Bh6 ch	Ke7
28. Bg5 ch	Kf8
29. Bh6 ch	Ke7
30. Bg6!	Bc7

If 30. ... Rf8 31. Bg5 checkmate.

31. Bg5 ch	Kf8
32. Bh6 ch	Ke7
33. f8=Q ch	Rxf8
34. Bxf8 ch	Kd8
35. Rf7	Qe8
36. Bg7	Nxe5
37. Bf6 ch	Resigns

37. ... Kc8 38. Rxc7 ch wins the house. ■